

Minutes
Montana Transportation Partnership
March 21, 2007 Meeting
Capital Building – Room 172
Helena, MT

Attendees: Marlene Disburg, David Eaton, Nicki Fee, Philip Hohenloe, Mary Millin, Vice Chair, Tom Osborn, Chair, Charlie Rehbein, Arlene Templer

Guests: Steven Potuzak, Jim Helgeson, Lyn Hellegaard, and Steve Earle (on the phone)

Old Business:

The Montana Transportation Partnership Mission Statement:

The Montana Transportation Partnership exists to enhance communication and understanding between people who are transportation disadvantaged, transportation providers, and state, local and Tribal agencies in support of efforts to improve transportation and provide Montanans with the services they need, want and deserve.

Motion: MILLIN/Eaton – motion carried

Development of Goals and Objectives:

Our vision for the future:

a. If we are completely successful in carrying out our mission and purpose, what will we be known for doing? What will we accomplish as a Partnership by 2012?

- Increase in service and availability. More transportation options in all areas, geography
- Inter-city connectivity and access.
- Uniform message from the Partnership and agencies regarding transportation for all members of the public – seniors and people with disabilities.
- All people who are transportation-dependent have access to transportation that meets their needs. Better ease of access.
- One stop shop exists, with an 800 phone number to arrange rides statewide.
- Environmental issues are addressed – promote bio-fuel vehicles.
- Fuel economy.
- Proper sized vehicles are available – one size doesn't fit all.
- Better coordination between FTA and DPHHS grantees.
- Increased awareness and fewer barriers to participation processes for riders.
- Better communication between users and providers.
- Better, more user-friendly vehicles.
- Transportation needs that meet all target populations.

- Transportation that meets health care needs, with time and location sensitivity, i.e. frontier areas are addressed.
- 24-hour service – 7-days per week .
- TAC has specific responsibilities and influence.
- TAC: People who are transportation disadvantaged are required to be members. They participate in leadership roles on the TAC.
- Transportation districts are part of county government.
- The coordination between our providers is a model for distribution of resources.
- The Partnership is funded and dedicated.
- The Partnership is recognized as a group to bring policy issues to discuss and can work itself out of a job through accomplishment of goals.

b. What challenges need to be overcome to reach that vision?

- Political will.
- Financial. Lack of transportation funding
- Technology needs to be affordable and available.
- Distances between cities.
- Higher priority for Transportation by all state and federal agencies.
- Lack of knowledge of community-specific problem.
- Lack of coordination.
- Lack of community involvement; complacency.
- People's independence.
- Attitudes of agencies and organization. They have the resources and abilities to make changes.
- Commitment.
- Communities thinking outside the box.

c. What opportunities will we take advantage of to reach our vision?

- The availability of money.
- More vehicles.
- The politician's ear.
- Re-authorization of transportation legislation.
- Transit money from FTA.
- Take advantage of coordination.
- Education.
- Legislation, over 2-3 sessions.
- The Governor's support of people with disabilities, seniors and people with low incomes.

4. Second draft vision statements to accompany our mission statement

- I. Riders are well aware of the services available and know how to use them.
- II. People who are transportation dependent have access to the services they want, and time sensitive travel needs are accommodated.

- III. Riders and providers, on the community level, are in regular communication and understand each others' needs and hopes for the future.
- IV. Services between our cities exist, and a toll-free 800 number is available to coordinate availability.
- V. Transportation providers in Montana pursue green, low environmental impact technologies, use alternative fuels whenever possible, and the most appropriate sized vehicles are always used.
- VI. Vehicles are accessible and rides are affordable.
- VII. Funding for the local providers are in place to best serve the needs of those who need them. Legislators understand the importance of this funding and its continuity.
- VIII. The Partnership and local collaborations are so successful that our approaches are a model nationally.

5. How do we get to our ideal future?

a. What tangible strategic directions will get us there?

- Increase funding through legislative action and improved coordination between funding sources.
- Explore opportunities to increase ride availability through personal use vehicles.
- Explore MDT, FTA, DPHHS grantee inclusion in the state insurance pool.
- Educate riders regarding opportunities to participate.
- Work with agency power brokers to affect change at the local level.
- MDT to think outside the box.
- Empower the TAC members.
- Educate the TAC members.
- Develop coordination plans that meet needs.
- Develop revenue.
- Influence legislation.
- Increase infrastructure.
- Provide travel training for users.
- Solve through community leadership.
- Update handbook, outreach and training.
- Develop coordination plans.
- Develop 5310 and 5311 grants.
- Develop memorandums of understanding and coordination agreements.
- Update MTP goals and action steps.
- Increase funding.
- Support environmentally-friendly politicians, including the lobbyists.
- Encourage coordination through meetings.
- Ensure the benefits to users are worthwhile so providers become committed.
- Make the mission known. Use public service announcements.
- Increase advertising to make people aware of existing services.
- Make required coordination among providers user friendly.

- Create a pilot project to test different service coordination and delivery approaches. Do so in regional districts.
- Pass legislation to Increase funding.
- Require TACs to have members who are transportation disadvantaged.
- Establish every county as an Urban Transportation District (UTD) with TACs in oversight roles.
- Fund the TACs and make them legislatively required.
- Motivate through incentives for general public to use public transit.
- Create distribution of bio-diesel fuel.
- Ensure electronic communication is statewide in coverage – cell phone and internet – with no blank / gap spots.
- Get legislators involved in the Partnership's processes .
- Get the Montana Association of County Commissioners involved in the Partnership.
- Make transportation for people a priority, via letters to the editor and TV/radio talk show appearances.
- We must make transportation an issue!!

b. What common ground is emerging? Where are we in obvious agreement?

- 24 hour service.
- Inter-city transportation.
- More input by users.
- Coordination of transportation among all realms, one stop shop.
- Attitudes of agencies and organizations with a commitment toward a coordinated system.
- The needs of people who are transportation dependent are met.
- Green operations – use of bio diesel, etc.

6. Analysis of the strategic directions

a. Of all the suggestions, which will be the easiest to implement?

- Enhance what the TACs already do, since they already exist.
- Complete the supplement of the handbook United We Ride.
- Give the TACs some influence; grow their authority.
- Get a legislator and a Montana Association of Counties representative to join and attend the Partnership meetings.
- Encourage the MT Department of Transportation to think outside the box, to listen to providers regarding revenues, policies and procedures. It's not the MDT way or the highway. Instead we find common ground and new solutions.
- Establish Transportation Districts. Get clarity on what the definition is, and explore funding options.
- Develop revenue sources that MDT can approve.
- Allow some non-conforming or non-standard income sources. An example is the FTA's allowance for flexibility.
- Change the name and structure of the TACs to give them more power and influence.

- Encourage full representation and attendance by the invited members. Get the true stakeholders truly involved.
- Provide training and guidance for existing TAC members on their role and what they can do.

b. Which approaches might require a ton of resources in time and money, but give us significant resources?

- Get funding to provide services and rides.
- Legislative changes. Don't count on the feds.
- Address the inequity in funding distribution between surface and transit.
- Continue to work on programs that alleviate administrative burdens.
- Get both DPHHS and FTE grant programs together and coordinated about services and talking about how to leverage their resources to make more rides available. Expand this resource at the statewide level.
- MDT provide match money. Get all the 5311 money out the door.
- Putting the funding requests to a vote of the people.

c. Which ideas have the most capacity to reach the most people we are serving?

- Things happen and are sustained on the local level. Develop the TACs and their influence. Be sure people who are transportation dependent sit on the TACs - There are 50+ TACs!
- Explore and implement a state insurance pool that the local providers can access.
- Educate the TAC members on consolidation AND coordination. Help them be more than a group of good hearted people. Support and fund them. Encourage a member of the county/city transportation governing board to be involved on each TAC.
- Pursue state legislation to empower the TACs and who officially must sit on them. Avoid duplication with existing committees. Clarify through the legislation the TAC members' roles and responsibilities. Fund the TACs.

d. Which would people who are transportation dependent tell us to pursue?

- 24/7 resources.
- Funding.
- Establish Transportation Districts.
- Provide the infrastructure: buses, drivers, operational requirements, fuel, etc.
- Focus on rural areas and development opportunities between towns to make them easier.
- Provide a statewide transportation infrastructure; re-establish it.

e. Which will take a long time perhaps, but we want to chip away at, and at least begin?

- Legislative change regarding policy and funding issues.
- Coordination plans.
- Public education.

f. Which of our on-going, continuing efforts should we re-commit to because they are successful?

- All of “e.”
- Develop a base of people to get them involved, to know what we’re trying to accomplish, as a step toward developing increased funding. This includes the people we currently serve.

g. What rises to the top? Which should we pursue to reach our vision?

- Get \$3.5 million for MDT to make the match.
- Invite a legislator and representative from MACO to serve on the Partnership.
- Develop a report outlining the needs, the case for developing Transportation Districts, and the role of the TACs.
- Through legislation, put meat on the TACs.
- Encourage MDT to allow providers to develop revenue streams. Ask them to help us look for solutions, and not just say “no.”
- Include the agencies involved in the issues. Prevent problems by talking about the issues with the people most involved.
- Encourage development, capacity building of the TAC members.
- Develop legislation to fund and recognize the Partnership.
- Finish the supplement on the Handbook.
- Provide training for users and community members on how to effectively operate the TACs.
- Explore monies for the 5311-F, inter-city opportunities.